



The Time Keeper

Essex County Museum & Historical Society Newsletter

October 2011

Join Us

Richmond Civil War Sampler Guided Bus Tour

Includes box lunch from **TBONZ and TUNA** and beverage.

The Valentine Richmond History Center guided tour, **The Civil War Sampler**, will last four hours. It will include Church Hill, Shockoe Bottom, Court End, the canal area, Hollywood Cemetery and Monument Ave. with stops at The Tredegar Iron Works and the battlefields of Gaines Mill and Cold Harbor.

Contact Kevin Dolan tour coordinator at 443-4236 kevin.dolan@bankatunion.com



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Museum Hours:
M, T, Th, Fr, Sat 10 am—3 pm

Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

The Board of the Essex County Museum and I would like to thank you for the support that you have shown the Museum.

This has been a good year for us. We partnered with the Essex County Library, and combined their Weekend with a Writer with our opening exhibit on "The War in Essex". Our Black History Event in cooperation with Richmond County Museum and Rappahannock Community College at the Old Beale Building was a great success with 100 people in attendance.

At the annual member meeting in May the ECMHS honored Jimmy Slaughter, author of *Settlers Southerners Americans; A History of Essex County*, with the 2011 Historic Preservation Award. At that meeting the membership also approved the ECMHS new bylaws.

I hope that you take the time to read all the reports included here so you will have a fuller picture of the work that so many people put into the making of this museum.

Suzanne Derieux, President

Annual Fund Campaign Beats Budget

Over 80 people have contributed to the Museum's 2011 Annual Fund Campaign to date making it one of the most successful ever and exceeding its budget. It was a welcome and positive achievement during a year when most families' personal budgets are stretched.

The ECMHS members and board of directors thank everyone who committed funds to help the Museum continue to preserve and present local history free to the citizens of our community.

This years campaign closes on December 31st. If you have misplaced your contribution envelop, just mail your check to ECMHS, PO Box 404, Tappahannock, VA 22560. If you want additional information about your contribution status, please call 804-443-4690 and leave a message for Kelly LaFollette or send an email to admin1ecmhs@gmail.com.

EXHIBITS and COLLECTIONS

The year 2011 has been a year of transitions in the galleries.

The Exhibit, "**Confederate Essex, 1861-1865**" opened in the Essex Gallery on April 16, 2011, and will continue with modifications through the Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration, 2011-2015. John Rennolds of Tappanahock, and others, graciously loaned many items from their personal collections for this exhibit. The much enjoyed diorama, "**Shelling of Camden**", was returned to the Steamboat Era Museum in Irvington. The Carl D. Silver Gallery is currently closed as the new exhibit "**A Brush with History**" is being constructed. It will feature fifteen paintings by Sidney E. King on loan from the collection of Herb Collins. **Opening on October 29th**, the exhibit will include memorabilia from King's studio to help tell the story of this remarkable painter who loved to bring history to life through his art.

Prior to its exit, the long-running and popular exhibit, "**Calm before the Storm, Life in Antebellum Essex**" was captured for future viewing on film by Ron Geiger with Anita Harrower serving as commentator.

Improvements to the Essex Gallery continued with the installation of new lighting and the placement of the first exhibit, "Confederate Essex"

in the newly secured glass enclosure.

Our collections continue to grow with over 200 new items so far in 2011. These include several letters and receipts associated with Robert Gaines Haile and the early days of the 55th Virginia Infantry at Fort Lowry, as well as the Sunnyside/Warner-Gardener clothing collection. From Jane Dawkins, we received 19th century hand drawn maps among approximately forty Essex-related papers and photographs. Lucy Gray of Newport News donated a substantial collection of items she inherited relating to the Brockenbrough family including photographs of Lucy Yates Brockenbrough, maker of the 1861 hair wreath currently on display in the museum.

Acquisitions added include, in memory of Julie Johnston, a handsome antebellum wardrobe of yellow pine believed to have been crafted in Essex County and, most recently, an 1839 store ledger from Loretto in Upper Essex.

Please visit the galleries often. Small changes happen weekly as the colorful story of Essex County continues to be told in new and varied ways.

David Jett, Curator

Docent Report

The museum has trained several new docents over the past several months who are now either filling a permanent slot or working as substitutes: Suzanne Derieux, Joe Johnston, Ned Garber, Mary Guess, Liz Russell, Cookie Elliott, Jane Schreiber, Barbara Sethman, Ann Moore, George Orton and Luther Derby.

Two docents have retired and each will be greatly missed, Kevin Dolan and Colin Smith. Docent training this year included the new point-of-sale system for the gift shop. Docents often receive requests from the gift shop manager and are enjoying taking a larger role in the gift shop.

A reminder that docent shopping day in the gift shop is every third Wednesday. On that day they receive an additional 20% discount on all

items. This is a small thank you for the exceptional job that our volunteers do.

Being a docent gives the volunteers an opportunity to meet folks and engage in some most interesting conversations! We encourage our members to participate in this most important role.

All Docents receive an orientation from the Director prior to assuming their responsibilities and all of the information needed to perform this function is located at the Visitors desk.

If you are interested in serving as a docent for half a day, once a month, please call the museum at 804-443-0690 and leave a message.

Diane Kean, Docent Director

Education Report

There were four programs year to date presented to school children; three were in-house and one was an outreach in association with the "Museums on the Go" program. An adult tour of Stratford was also conducted. Total attendance for all of these was 293. This is much lower than last year, however, the decrease had been predicted because we, as an outreach partner, cannot go to the same schools year after year. Many of the schools were not in a position to commit due to the dramatic change in funding and the uncertainties they were experiencing. Even though many of the other museums are having difficulty in getting volunteers, they have been most cooperative in keeping the "Museums on the Go" program alive and well.

Yours truly is also on a committee which has been named The Northern Neck Alliance Council. Our mission is to share ideas and resources to enhance educational opportunities in the Northern Neck, including Essex. Our goal is to have a Teacher's Institute initially trialed in Westmoreland with six teachers as an advisory group to develop programs to enhance the SOL's. We would then overlay what we, the museums, have to offer and develop a one week training module to be presented to about 12-15 teachers, hopefully during a week in the summer of 2012. Field trips and speakers would be part of the agenda. Funding and much coordination have to be accomplished, but it has great potential for the entire region.

Currently, Essex Museum has committed to participate in an open house at Richmond Elementary on Monday, October 3, 2011. We will be among 6-7 museums represented. The principal estimates about 300 in attendance. Thanks to David Jett for providing my name to the principal as the outreach coordinator.

I met with the principal at Tappahannock Elementary and he has requested a history outreach program for the 3rd and 4th grade students on Wednesday, November 16, 2011. A "Museum on the Go" request has been sent out to the participating museums.

Joan Moore. Education Director

Notes from the Gift Shop

Excitement is the word for the gift shop this year. We have held two author book discussions and receptions. We partnered with the Essex County Library for an event with Ellen Brown author of "Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*" and on Sept. the 18th, 25 people enjoyed a Sunday afternoon with Jimmy Slaughter, author of *Settlers Southerners Americans; The History of Essex County*.

Those books and numerous other local history books are in the **Books** section of the Gift Shop, along with an impressive selection of children's books.

The Gift Shop is joining the 21st century in the use of social media and the internet. If you visit the www.ecmhs.org website and click on the NEWS/Blog and facebook icons, you will get the latest Gift Shop news. There is also a shopping page online in the Museum Shop.

Saturday, October 29th, the gift shop holiday shopping season begins! Visitors will be able to take advantage of year-end discounts: Historical toys (25%), local pottery (15%), and painted glassware (15%). New gift items from local artisans have also been added for the shopping season. River Glass, artisan Anne Holiday uses her collection of locally found river glass and shards to fashion attractive jewelry. We now have an assortment of pendants and earrings, many with silver design. Also hand carved walking sticks, hanging glass vases, and local honey will be among the new items.

As a special incentive to visit the new Sidney King exhibit, there will be a sale table of 50% items and light refreshments.

Hope to see you on the 29th ! Look for coupons in this and other newsletters.

Priscilla Vaughan, Gift Shop Manager

Upcoming Events—Mark Your Calendar

Pancake Breakfast
 Applebee's
 Nov. 5th
 7:30 am—9:30 am



\$5.00 if you purchase tickets at the Museum
 \$6.00 at the door

10% off coupon
Museum Gift Shop
 Valid only for
Oct. 29, 2011

Holiday Shopping
 at the Museum Gift Shop
 Saturday, October 29th
 9:00 am—4:00 pm

Bring your 10% coupon
 (above)
 Members 10% discount
 Always!

OCTOBER 2009

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- 15th-Farmer's Market
- 18th-Qtrly. Board Meeting
- 22nd-Richmond Bus Tour
 Civil War Sampler
- 29th-Sidney King Exhibit Opens
 -Gift Shop Holiday Shopping

- 5th-Applebee's Pancake Breakfast
 7:30-9:30 am

Check out our website!
www.essexmuseum.org

Essex County Museum & Historical Society
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